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(54) **HIGH ENERGY DENSITY METAL-OXYGEN BATTERY**

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15, 2009, provisional application No. 61/336,095,
filed on Jan. 14, 2010.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
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H01M 4/62 (2006.01)
H01M 12/06 (2006.01)
H01M 6/30 (2006.01)
H01M 4/38 (2006.01)

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CPC **H01M 4/62** (2013.01); **H01M 4/38** (2013.01);
H01M 6/30 (2013.01); **H01M 12/06** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
USPC 429/231.95
See application file for complete search history.

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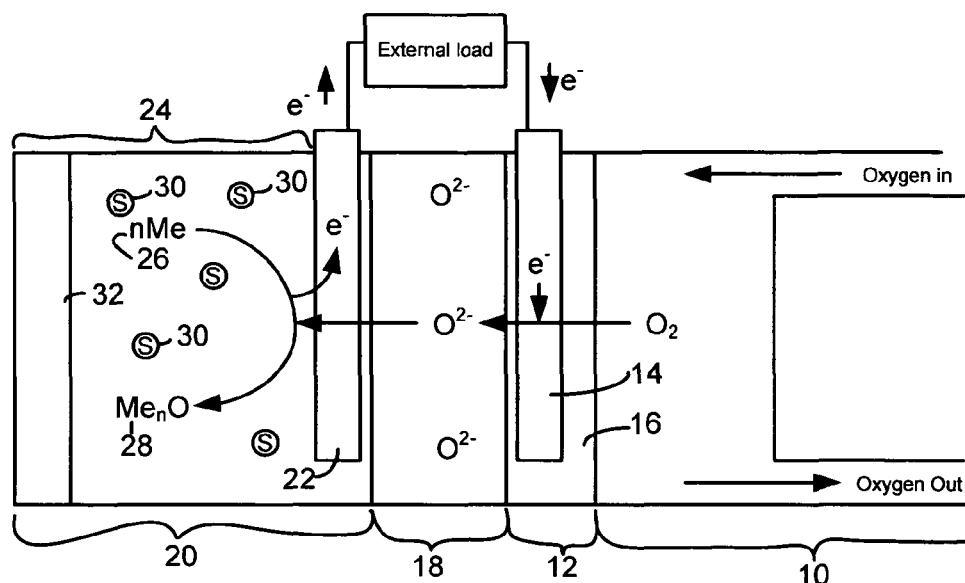
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

The battery includes a cathode configured to generate oxygen
ions during discharge of the battery. The battery also includes
an oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte that receives the oxy-
gen ions from the cathode during discharge of the battery. The
battery further includes an anode that has an anode active
medium positioned in the pores of a porous anode current
collector. The anode active medium receives the oxygen ions
conducted through the oxygen ion conducting electrolyte
during discharge of the battery. Additionally, the anode active
medium includes an elemental metal that reacts with the
oxygen ions to form a metal oxide during discharge of the
battery.

20 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets



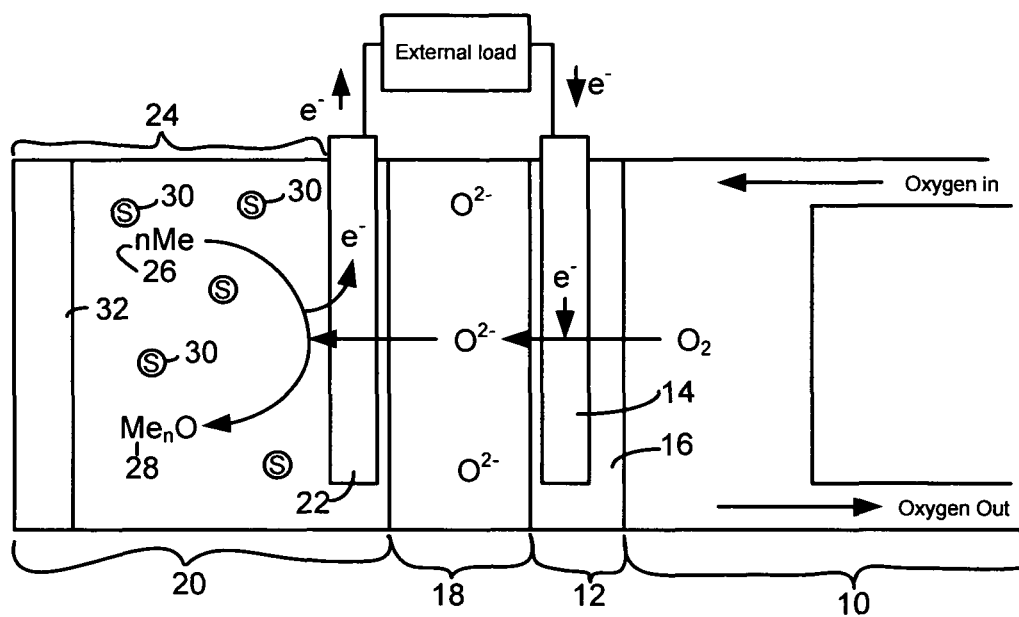


Figure 1A

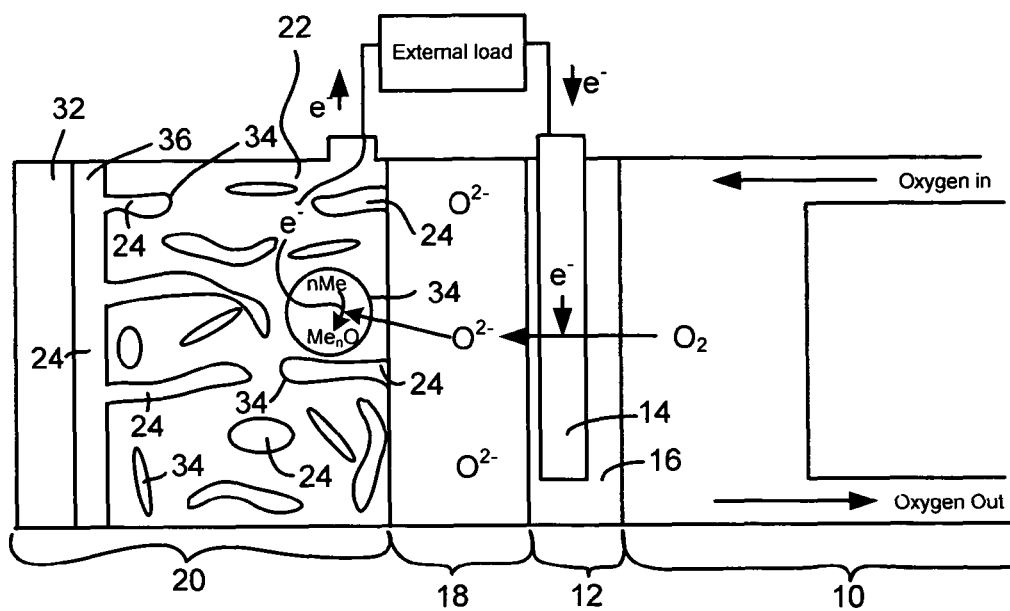


Figure 1B

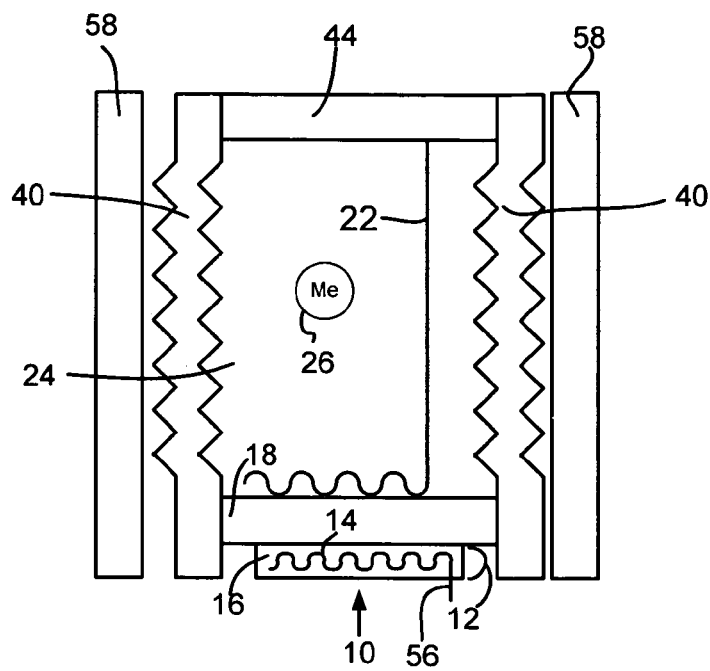


Figure 2

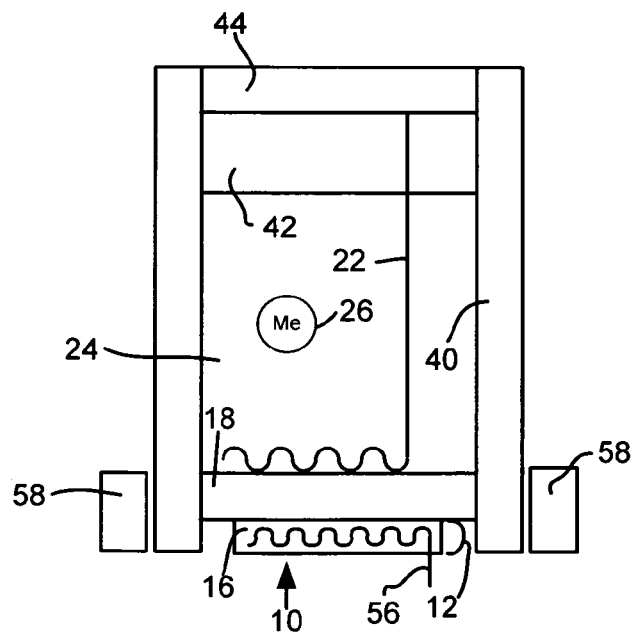


Figure 3

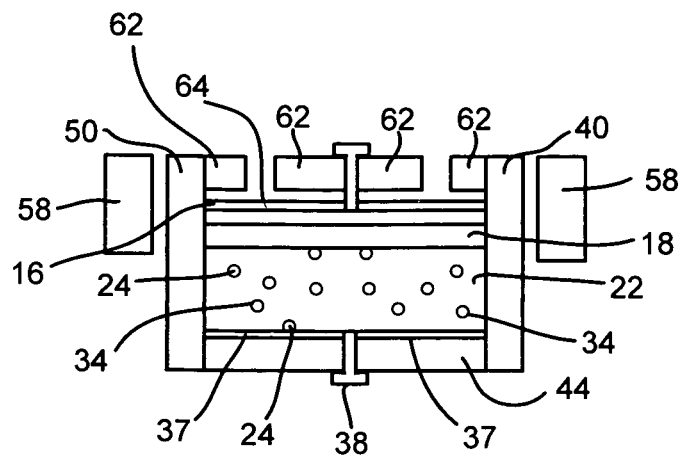


Figure 4

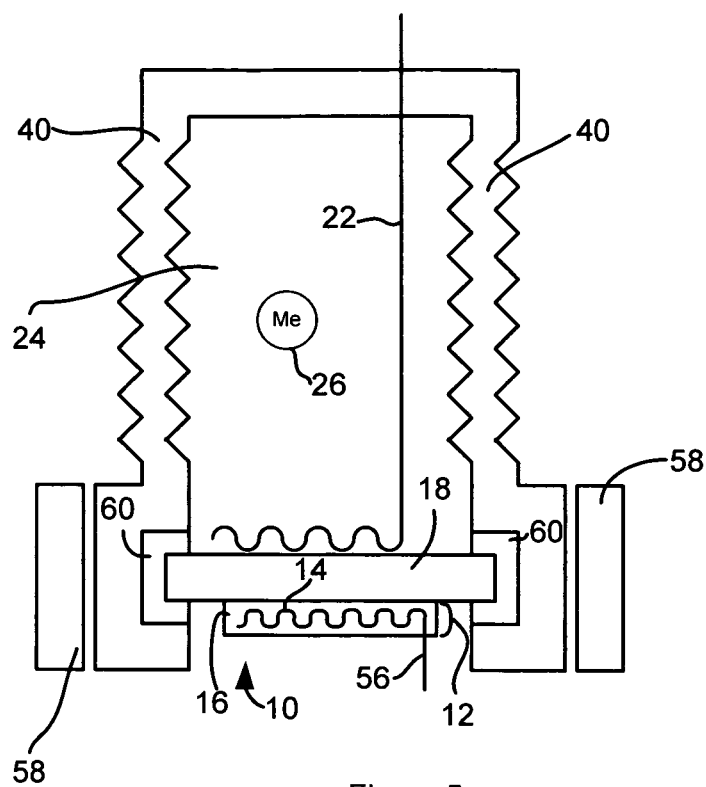


Figure 5

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HIGH ENERGY DENSITY METAL-OXYGEN BATTERY

RELATED APPLICATIONS

This Application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/216,358, filed on May 15, 2009, entitled "High Energy Density Metal-Oxygen Battery," and incorporated herein in its entirety; and this Application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/336,095, filed on Jan. 14, 2010, entitled "High Energy Density Metal-Oxygen Battery," and incorporated herein in its entirety.

FIELD

The present invention relates to power sources and more particularly to batteries and hybrid batteries.

BACKGROUND

Metal-oxygen batteries can provide large energy levels because the active material in the cathode (oxygen) can be provided indefinitely from air. Current metal-air batteries require a counter anion to capture the metal ions that are generated during discharge of the battery. An example of a common counter ion is hydroxide generated by reduction of a catholyte such as water. Another common catholyte is ammonium chloride. The batteries that employ these catholyte typically include a reservoir of the catholyte. The reservoir and catholyte increase the size and weight of the battery and accordingly decrease the energy density of the battery. As a result, there is a need for a metal-oxygen battery having a reduced energy density.

SUMMARY

The battery includes a cathode configured to generate oxygen ions during discharge of the battery. The battery also includes an oxygen ion conducting electrolyte that receives the oxygen ions from the cathode during discharge of the battery. The battery further includes an anode that has an anode active medium positioned in the pores of a porous anode current collector. The anode active medium receives the oxygen ions conducted through the oxygen ion conducting electrolyte during discharge of the battery. Additionally, the anode active medium includes an elemental metal that reacts with the oxygen ions to form a metal oxide during discharge of the battery.

In some instances, the anode active medium is a liquid and the oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte is a solid. The elemental metal can include or consist of lithium metal.

In some instances, the elemental metal is included in a solution that also includes one or more melting point reducers. The melting point reducers are selected to reduce the melting point of the metal oxide in the solution below the melting point that the metal oxide would have in the solution if the one or more melting point reducers were not present in the solution.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

FIG. 1A illustrates the operation of the battery.

FIG. 1B illustrates operation of another embodiment of the battery.

FIG. 2 illustrates a possible construction of the battery.

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FIG. 3 illustrates another possible construction of the battery.

FIG. 4 illustrates another possible construction of the battery.

FIG. 5 illustrates another possible construction of the battery.

DESCRIPTION

A battery includes a cathode that generates oxygen ions during the discharge of the battery. In some instances, the cathode is configured to generate these ions from air and electrons received from a cathode current collector. The battery also includes an oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte that receives the oxygen ions from the cathode. The battery also includes an anode that includes an anode active medium that receives the oxygen ions conducted through the electrolyte. The anode active medium can include one or more elemental metals. The one or more elemental metals give up electrons to an anode current collector and the resulting metal ion reacts with the oxygen ions during the discharge of the battery to form a metal oxide. In view of these reactions, an additional reactant is not needed at the cathode. As a result, the battery does not need a catholyte or reservoir for storing the catholyte. The absence of the catholyte and reservoir can increase the mass-based energy density of the battery.

The one or more elemental metals can include or consist of metal that is molten at the operating temperature of the battery. The use of molten elemental metal can permit the elemental metal to directly contact the solid oxygen ion conducting electrolyte rather than relying on an additional liquid component between the anode active medium and a solid oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte. The elimination of this additional component can further increase the mass-based energy density of the battery. An example of an elemental metal that is a liquid at the operating temperature of the battery is lithium metal.

Since a metal oxide is formed at the anode, this metal oxide could deposit on the surface of the electrolyte and/or on the surface of the current collector. Deposition of metal oxide on the surface of the electrolyte and/or on the surface of the current collector can reduce the access of the one or more elemental metals to the oxygen ions and can accordingly increase the internal impedance of the battery and possibly stop the reactions at the anode. In one embodiment, the anode current collector is porous and the anode active medium is positioned in the pores of the anode current collector. Placement of the anode active medium in the pores of the anode current collector can increase the area over which the anode active medium is interfaced with the anode current collector above the area that can be achieved when a non-porous anode current collector is used. The increased interface area reduces the effects of the metal oxide being deposited on a surface of the anode current collector and/or the electrolyte. For instance, by increasing the surface area of the anode current collector, the elemental metal can continue access the oxygen ions from the anode current collector after the formation of metal oxide on the surface of the anode current collector would previously reduced the accessibility of the oxygen ions to the elemental metal. Accordingly, the porous anode current collector can provide a reduced internal resistance.

Further, the one or more elemental metals can include or consist of lithium metal. As a result, lithium oxide and lithium ions are formed at the anode. Lithium oxide is highly conductive of these lithium ions. As a result, the lithium ions are easily conducted through the lithium oxide so it can continue to react with the oxygen ions. As a result, the use of the lithium

metal in combination with the oxygen ions provides a reduced internal resistance. Other elemental metals may provide the advantages associated with the use of lithium metal. Additionally or alternately, the use of lithium metal as one of the elemental metals can enhance the energy density of the battery as a result of the high capacity of lithium metal (about 3860 Ah/kg). Further, the lithium metal can be in direct contact with the ion-conducting electrolyte.

FIG. 1A is a schematic of the battery. The direction of electron (e) flow illustrated in FIG. 1A is during discharge of the battery. The direction of the electron flow is reversed upon charging of the battery.

The battery of FIG. 1A includes an oxygen source 10. Suitable oxygen sources include, but are not limited to, air and/or can be the ambient atmosphere in which the battery is placed. The battery also includes a cathode 12 that receives the oxygen from the oxygen source 10. The cathode 12 includes a cathode current collector 14 and a cathode active medium 16. During discharge of the battery, the cathode 12 reduces the oxygen received from the oxygen supply. Accordingly, the cathode 12 is configured to generate oxygen ions (O^{2-}) using electrons that travel through the cathode current collector 14. Suitable cathode current collectors 14 include, but are not limited to, silver, nickel based metal alloy, and ferritic stainless steel. Suitable cathode active media 16 include, but are not limited to, lanthanum strontium manganite.

The battery includes an oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte 18 that receives the oxygen ions generated by the cathode 12. The oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte 18 can be a solid at the operating temperature of the battery. For instance, suitable oxygen ion-conducting electrolytes 18 include, but are not limited to, yttrium stabilized zirconia, samarium doped ceria, and/or gadolinium doped ceria. The battery includes an oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte 18 that receives the oxygen ions generated by the cathode 12.

The battery also includes an anode 20. The anode 20 includes an anode current collector 22 and an anode active medium 24. During discharge of the battery, the anode 20 receives the oxygen ions from the oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte 18. The anode active medium 24 includes or consists of one or more metals in their elemental form (elemental metal 26). The anode active medium 24 can be a liquid at the operating temperature of the battery. For instance, the one or more elemental metals 26 can be molten at the operating temperature of the battery. During discharge, the elemental metal 26 forms elemental metal ions. For instance, the elemental metal 26 gives up electrons that are carried by the anode current collector 22. The resulting elemental metal ions react with the oxygen ions received from the oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte 18 to form a metal oxide 28.

In some instances, the anode active medium is positioned in the pores of a porous anode current collector. For instance, FIG. 1B illustrates the battery of FIG. 1A where the anode current collector includes pores 34 and the anode active medium 24 is positioned in the pores 34. During the discharge of the battery, the anode 20 receives the oxygen ions from the oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte 18. The oxygen ions can be conducted through the anode current collector 22 and be received by anode active medium 24 in the pores 34. Alternately, the anode active medium 24 can receive the oxygen ions directly from the oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte 18. For instance, all or a portion of the pores 34 can be open to the oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte 18 as shown in FIG. 1B. The anode active medium 24 in these open pores can contact the ion-conducting electrolyte 18. Accordingly, the oxygen ions can travel from the oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte 18

directly into the anode active medium 24. During discharge, the one or more elemental metals in the anode active medium 24 generate elemental metal ions. For instance, the elemental metal 26 gives up electrons that are carried by the anode current collector 22. The resulting elemental metal ions react with the oxygen ions received from the oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte 18 to form a metal oxide 28.

As is evident from FIG. 1B, the electrons generated from the one or more elemental metals 26 travel through the anode current collector 22 to a terminal of the battery. As a result, the anode current collector 22 can be configured to provide a continuous path that the electrons can travel from the pore 34 where the electron is generated to a terminal of the battery.

The battery can include a reservoir 36 of the anode active medium 24. The anode active medium 24 can contact the anode current collector 22. As is evident from FIG. 1B, all or a portion of the pores 34 can be open to the reservoir 36. As a result, when the anode active medium 24 is a liquid or gel, the anode active medium 24 can enter the pores 34 of the anode current collector 22 from the reservoir 36.

The reservoir is optional and need not be included in the battery.

Although FIG. 1B illustrates the pores as being irregularly spaced and shaped, the pores need not be irregularly spaced and shaped. For instance, a suitable porous current collector can include multiple pores that each have about the shape. As an example, the pores can each be drilled to about the same depth in a non-porous substrate. Additionally or alternately, a suitable porous current collector can include multiple pores that are regularly spaced such as pores having grid, matrices, or lattice spacing. As an example, the pores can each be drilled into a non-porous substrate in a grid pattern.

A suitable porosity for a porous current collector includes, but is not limited to, a porosity greater than 10%, 20%, or 30%, and/or less than 90%, 80%, or 70%. A suitable average diameter for the pores include, but are not limited to, an average diameters greater than 1 nm, 10 nm, or 1000 nm, and/or less than 10 mm, 5 mm, or 1 mm. Further, a suitable average length for the pores include, but are not limited to, an average lengths greater than 1 nm, 10 nm, or 1000 nm, and/or less than 10 mm, 5 mm, or 1 mm.

The metal oxide 28 formed at the anode 20 can be a solid at the operating temperature of the battery. For instance, when the one or more elemental metals 26 includes or consists of lithium metal, the metal oxide 28 that forms in lithium oxide (Li_2O). Lithium oxide has a melting point of about 1567° C. and lithium metal has a melting point of around 180° C. while the operating temperature of the battery can be at temperatures around 500-900° C. As a result, the metal oxide 28 formed at the anode 20 can be a solid during the operation of the battery while the elemental metal is a liquid. This solid metal oxide 28 can deposit on the surface of the oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte 18 and/or the anode current collector. This deposition of the solid metal oxide 28 can increase the internal resistance of the battery. However, when the one or more elemental metals 26 are molten at the operating temperature of the battery, the liquid can convect the resulting metal oxide 28 away from the surface of the oxygen ion conducting electrolyte 18 as illustrated by the arrow in FIG. 1A. The convection of the resulting metal oxide 28 away from the oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte 18 can reduce or prevent the increase in internal resistance associated with deposition of the metal oxide 28 on the oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte 18.

The anode active medium 24 can optionally include one or more melting point reducers 30 in solution with the one or more liquid elemental metals 26. Melting point reducers 30

can take advantage of the eutectic effect to reduce the melting point of the metal oxide **28** formed in the anode **20** during discharge of the battery. For instance, certain metal oxides **28** (called secondary metal oxides below) and metal halides can reduce the melting point of the metal oxides **28** formed at the anode **20**. As an example, the anode active medium **24** can be a solution that includes the combination of lithium metal and a secondary metal oxide such as boron oxide (B_2O_3). This solution can reduce the melting point of lithium oxide from around 1500° C. to around 500° C. As a result, when the temperature of the battery is above 500° C., the lithium oxide does not form as a solid but instead stays in solution with the lithium metal and boron oxide. Accordingly, the melting point reducers **30** can reduce or prevent the increase in internal resistance associated with deposition of the metal oxide **28** on the oxygen ion conducting electrolyte **18**.

Suitable melting point reducers **30** act in combination with the one or more liquid elemental metals **26** to reduce the melting point of the metal oxide **28** formed at the cathode **12**. Examples of melting point reducers **30** include, but are not limited to, metal oxides **28** such as boron oxide (B_2O_3) and/or phosphorus oxide (P_2O_5) and/or metal halides such as lithium chloride and/or potassium chloride. During charging of the battery, secondary metal oxides such as boron oxide (B_2O_3) and/or phosphorus oxide (P_2O_5) are less likely to reduce back to their metal form because the reduction potential of these secondary metal oxides is generally higher than the reduction potential of the metal oxides **28** formed at the anode **20** such as lithium oxide. Further, because of the reduction potentials associated with these secondary metal oxides, during discharge of the battery, the secondary metal oxides would preferentially re-form over the metal oxides **28** formed at the anode **20**. As a result, these secondary metal oxides will be present in the anode active material during the discharge of the battery.

The one or more melting point reducers **30** are present in the anode active material at a concentration that takes advantage of the eutectic effect or forms a eutectic solution. For instance, the level of melting point reduction for the metal oxide **28** is a function of the ratio of the one or more melting point reducers **30**, the one or more liquid elemental metals **26** and the metal oxide **28**. However, the concentration of the metal oxide **28** formed at the anode **20** changes during discharge of the battery. For instance, the concentration of the metal oxide **28** at the anode **20** increases during discharge of the battery. As a result, the concentration of the one or more melting point reducers **30** can be selected to achieve a particular metal oxide **28** melting point at a particular stage in the discharge of the battery. Increasing the concentration of the one or more melting point reducers **30** can reduce the mass-based energy density of the battery. As a result, the desired concentration of the one or more melting point reducers **30** may need to be balanced against the possibility of a reduction in the mass-based energy density.

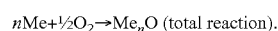
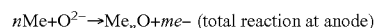
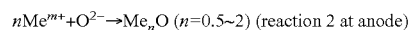
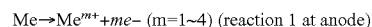
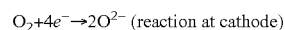
As noted above, in some instances, the one or more elemental metals **26** include or consist of lithium metal which forms lithium oxide during the discharge of the battery. Lithium oxide is highly conductive of lithium ions. As a result, the lithium ions are easily conducted through the lithium oxide in order to react with the oxygen ions. As a result, the use of lithium metal can reduce negative effects from lithium oxide depositing on the oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte **18**. Additionally, the use of lithium metal as one of the elemental metals **26** can enhance the energy density of the battery as a result of the high capacity of lithium metal (about 3860 Ah/kg). Further, the lithium metal can be in direct contact with the oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte **18**.

The anode active medium **24** can optionally include one or more solids **32** in addition to the one or more liquid elemental metals **26**. The one or more liquid elemental metals **26** can be located between the one or more solids **32** and the oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte **18** as is illustrated in FIG. 1A and FIG. 1B. In some instances, the one or more liquid elemental metals **26** is located between the one or more solids **32** and the oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte **18** without the solid **32** contacting the oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte **18**. This arrangement permits the liquid portion of the anode active medium **24** to continue function as described above with respect to the metal oxide **28** formed at the anode **20**.

Examples of suitable solids **32** for inclusion in the anode active medium **24** are metal alloys. Suitable metal alloys include, but are not limited to, lithium metal alloys. Examples of suitable alloys include, but are not limited to, lithium-aluminum alloy, lithium-silicon alloy, and lithium-silicon-iron alloy. The solid **32** can act as an active material in the anode **20** or can act as an inactive material.

Suitable anode current collectors **20** include, but are not limited to, nickel, nickel oxide-gadolinium doped ceria, nickel oxide-samarium doped ceria, nickel oxide-yttrium stabilized zirconia or a combination of above. In some cases, one or more elemental metals **26** can serve as both the current collector and the one or more elemental metals **26** in the anode active medium **24**. As a result, the anode active medium **24** and the anode current collector **22** need not be separate components.

The reactions at the anode **20** and cathode **12** of FIG. 1A and/or FIG. 1B can be illustrated as follows:



In both FIG. 1A, FIG. 1B, and the above reactions, Me represents a metal, the variable m can be greater than 1 and/or less than 4 and in some instances m=1~4, and the variable n can be greater than 0 or 0.5 and/or less than 2 or 4 and in some instances m=0.5~2. The metal can be a monovalent elemental metal **26** such as lithium. However, the battery can be operated with elemental metals **26** that are not monovalent. Examples of metals that are suitable for use as the elemental metal **26** includes, but is not limited to, sodium, potassium, magnesium, calcium, and zinc.

The battery can be operated at elevated temperatures. For instance, the battery can be operated at temperatures at or above about 500° C. and is generally operated at temperatures greater than 650° C., 750° C., 850° C., and/or 750° C., 850° C. Accordingly, the battery can include a heater (not shown). Alternately, the battery can be positioned in a location where the ambient atmosphere causes the battery to be heated to the desired temperature. For instance, the battery can be positioned so the battery is exposed to the exhaust of an aircraft. In some instances, once battery discharge is achieved at the operational temperature, the battery can generate enough internal heat to maintain itself at the operational temperature.

The reactions illustrated in FIG. 1A and FIG. 1B are reversible. As a result, the battery can be re-charged and can operate as a secondary battery.

FIG. 2 illustrates an example of a suitable battery construction. The battery includes a case **40**. The anode active material is positioned in an interior of the case **40**. The anode active

material changes volume during the use of the battery. For instance, as is evident from the above discussion, oxygen enters the anode active material during the formation of the metal oxide **28** that occurs during discharge of the battery. Additionally, oxygen exits from the anode active material during charging of the battery. This change in the amount of oxygen causes the volume of the anode active material to change. In order to compensate for these changes in volume, the case **40** can be constructed so the interior volume of the case **40** can be expanded and/or contracted. For instance, the case **40** of FIG. **2** has a bellows construction. As is evident from the above discussion, the amount of metal oxide **28** in the battery increases during discharge of the battery. The increased level of metal oxide **28** increases the volume of the battery interior. The bellows shape allows the case **40** volume to increase so as to compensate for the increased volume of metal oxide **28**. Additionally, the amount of metal oxide **28** in the battery decreases during discharge of the battery. The decreased volume of metal oxide **28** decreases the volume of the battery interior. The bellows shape allows the case **40** volume to decrease to match the decreased amount of metal oxide **28**.

An alternative to a case **40** having a bellows construction is illustrated in FIG. **3**. The case **40** of FIG. **3** includes a reservoir **42** of a gas. The reservoir **42** is constructed such that the gas is compressed during the expansion of the anode active material and expands during contraction of the anode active material. Accordingly, the volume of the reservoir **42** can decrease during the expansion of the anode active material and increase during contraction of the anode active material. A suitable gas for inclusion in the reservoir **42** includes, but is not limited to, Argon.

FIG. **4** illustrates an example of a suitable battery construction for a battery constructed according to FIG. **1B**. The battery includes a case **40**. The anode includes a porous anode current collector **22** with the anode active medium **24** positioned in the pores **34**. The anode includes an anode adhesion layer **37** in contact with the anode current collector **22**. The anode adhesion layer **37** can act as an adhesive between a secondary anode current collector **38** and the anode current collector **22**. The anode adhesion layer **37** can be electrically conductive and can also provide some current collection functionality. The secondary anode current collector **38** can serve as a terminal for the battery. In instances where sufficient electrical contact can be achieved between the secondary anode current collector and the anode current collector, the anode adhesion layer **37** is optional.

The battery shown in FIG. **4** excludes the reservoir **36** disclosed in the context of FIG. **1B**. However, the battery of FIG. **4** can be modified to include the reservoir **36**. For instance, a cover **44** seals a first end of the case **40**. The cover **44** can be spaced apart from the anode current collector **22**. The space between the cover **44** and the anode current collector **22** can serve as the reservoir **36**.

In some instances, a battery having the construction of FIG. **4** does not require that the case have a bellows discussed above with respect to FIG. **2** and FIG. **3**. However, a battery having the construction of FIG. **4** can employ a case with a bellows.

In FIG. **2** through FIG. **4** a cover **44** seals a first end of the case **40**. In some instances, the cover **44** hermetically seals the first end of the case **40**. The anode current collector **22** is in electrical communication with the cover **44**. For instance, the anode current collector **22** of FIG. **2** and FIG. **3** can be welded to the cover **44**. Alternately, the secondary anode current collector **38** of FIG. **4** can provide electrical communication between the anode current collector **22** and the cover **44**. As a

result, the cover **44**, the secondary anode current collector **38**, and/or the case **40** can serve as a terminal for the battery. In some instances, the anode current collector **22** or the secondary anode current collector **38** optionally extends through the cover **44**. When the anode current collector **22** extends through the cover **44**, a portion of the anode current collector **22** that is accessible from outside of the case **40** can serve as a terminal for the battery, the cover **44** can serve as the terminal, and/or the case **40** can serve as the terminal. When the secondary anode current collector **38** extends through the cover **44**, the secondary anode current collector can optionally be welded to the cover.

The cover **44** is optional. For instance, the case **40** can have a closed end as shown in FIG. **5**.

A suitable material for the case **40** includes, but is not limited to, stainless steel, nickel, and nickel metal alloy. A suitable material for the cover **44** includes, but is not limited to, stainless steel, nickel, and nickel metal alloy.

The oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte **18** is positioned between the cathode **12** and the anode **20**. The oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte **18** can contact the anode **20** and the cathode **12**. In particular, the oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte **18** can contact the one or more elemental metals in the anode **20**.

In some instances, such as shown in FIG. **2** and FIG. **3**, the electrolyte **18** seals a second opening in the case **40**. In some instances, the electrolyte **18** hermetically seals the second end of the case **40**. A sealing material **60** can optionally be positioned between the case **40** and the oxygen ion conducting electrolyte **18** in order to seal the second opening as shown in FIG. **5**. The sealing material can be a brazing material or a compression sealing material. As a result, the battery can be compression sealed. In some instances, such as shown in FIG. **4**, a second cover **62** seals a second opening in the case **40**. One or more openings can extend through the second cover **62** in order to provide the cathode active medium access to oxygen. A sealing material (not shown) can optionally be positioned between the case and the second cover **62** in order to seal the second opening. The sealing material can be a brazing material or a compression sealing material. As a result, the battery can be compression sealed. The sealing material can be an electrical insulator in order to insulate the second cover **62** from the case.

The cathode **12** and the cathode current collector **14** can be arranged such that they do not contact the case in order to prevent a short in the battery. For instance, the cathode **12** can be spaced apart from the case as illustrated in FIG. **2** through FIG. **3** and FIG. **5**.

As shown in FIG. **2** through FIG. **4**, the cathode current collector **14** can be arranged in the cathode **12** such that a portion of the cathode current collector **14** that is accessible from outside of the case **40** can serve as a terminal **56** for the battery. Although FIG. **2** and FIG. **3** illustrate the cathode current collector **14** included within the cathode active medium **16**, the cathode current collector **14** can be positioned on the surface of the cathode active medium **16**. For instance, as shown in FIG. **4**, the cathode can include a cathode adhesion layer **64** in contact with the cathode active medium **16**. The cathode adhesion layer **64** can act as an adhesive between the cathode current collector **14** and the cathode active medium **16**. The cathode adhesion layer **64** can be electrically conductive and can also provide some current collection functionality. In instances where sufficient electrical contact can be achieved between the cathode current collector **14** and the cathode active medium **16**, the cathode adhesion layer **64** is optional.

As noted above, the battery can be operated at elevated temperatures such as temperatures at or above about 600° C. The battery can optionally include components **58** for elevating the temperature of the battery to these levels. For instance, the battery can include components **58** for heating the battery. As an example, the battery can include tubes and/or conduits for carrying heated fluids and/or heating elements. Additionally or alternately, the case **40** can include tubes and/or conduits for carrying heated fluids and/or heating elements. In one example, the heating component **58** is an inductive heating coil. The heating component **58** can be positioned outside of the case and can be spaced apart from the case as shown in FIG. **2** or FIG. **3**. Although FIG. **2** through FIG. **5** illustrate a heating component **58** being spaced apart from the case, a heating component **58** can contact the case and/or be integrated into the walls of the case.

The heating components **58** are optional. In some instances, the battery can be elevated to the operational temperature by the environment in which the battery is placed. For instance, a battery constructed according to FIG. **2** or FIG. **3** can be placed in a location where the battery is exposed to the level of heat needed to elevate the temperatures of the battery to the operational temperature. As an example, a battery constructed according to FIG. **2** or FIG. **3** can be placed in a location where the battery is exposed to the heat from aircraft exhaust.

A method of fabricating the battery includes forming a multi-layer sheet that includes the cathode **16** and electrolyte **18**. An electrolyte slurry can be generated as a precursor for the sheet. The electrolyte slurry can be generated by mixing a powder for the electrolyte with a solvent and a binder. Suitable solvents include, but are not limited to, water and organic solvents such as alcohol. Suitable binders include, but are not limited to, poly(vinyl alcohol), polyacrylate and polyethylene glycol. A cathode slurry can also be generated as a precursor for the sheet. The cathode slurry can be generated by mixing a powder of the cathode active material with a solvent and a binder. Suitable solvents include, but are not limited to, water and organic solvents such as alcohol. Suitable binders include, but are not limited to, poly(vinyl alcohol), polyacrylate and polyethylene glycol.

The sheet can be generated by coating a substrate with the electrolyte slurry and drying the electrolyte solvent. The cathode slurry can then be coated on the dried electrolyte slurry. The result can then be calcinated to form the multi-layer sheet. Alternately, the sheet can be generated by coating a substrate with the electrolyte slurry and calcinating the electrolyte slurry. The cathode slurry can then be coated on the calcinated electrolyte slurry. The result can then be calcinated to form the multi-layer sheet. The resulting multi-layer sheet and the substrate can be separated. The calcination temperatures range from 700~1400° C. The size of cathode **16** can be smaller than the electrolyte **18** or the anode current collector as shown in FIG. **2** through FIG. **5**. The cathode can be smaller than the electrolyte as a result of the process used to coat the cathode slurry on the dried electrolyte slurry or the calcinated electrolyte slurry.

The anode current collector **22** can be bonded to the anode side of the multi-layer sheet using anode contact paste such as nickel paste.

The above assembly can be placed on the case **40** so as to seal an opening in the case. The assembly can be bonded to the case using metal-alloy brazing material or by compression-sealed to the case along with the sealing material such as alumina felt, mica sheet, or vermiculite sheet. Both bonding methods can provide hermetic sealing.

The end of the anode current collector **22** can be welded to the cover **44**. Suitable welds include, but are not limited to, resistive welds, sonic welds and laser welds.

The anode active media **24** is generated by feeding elemental metal **26** in an ingot, sheet or powder form into the case **40**. After filling the case **40** with elemental metal **26**, the cover **44** is welded to the other end of the case **40**. Suitable welds include, but are not limited to, resistive welds, sonic welds, and laser welds. In some cases, the cover **44** can be compression-sealed to the case with a sealing material such as alumina felt, mica plate, or vermiculite sheet.

Another method of fabricating the battery includes forming a multi-layer sheet that includes the cathode **16**, electrolyte **18**, and anode **20**. The method includes forming the porous anode current collector **22**. The porous anode current collector **22** can be formed by generating a mixture that includes a powder of the material for the anode current collector **22** and a binder such as a polymer binder. Suitable binders include, but are not limited to, polyvinyl alcohol, sucrose, polyacrylate, and polymethacrylate. The binder is preferably present in the mixture in a range of about 5-80 wt %. The mixture can be used in techniques including extrusion, injection molding and/or pressing techniques such as die molding in order to form the mixture into the desired shape. The result can be sintered in order to fuse the powder of the material for the anode current collector. Additionally, the sintering removes the binder. The removal of the binder forms the pores in the anode current collector.

The oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte can be coated on the anode current collector. The coating can be formed by using an electrolyte slurry with an application technique such as spray pyrolysis coating, laser plasma coating, colloidal deposition coating, sol-gel coating, and dip-coating. The cathode active medium **16** can then be coated on the oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte using a cathode slurry with an application technique such as spray pyrolysis coating, laser plasma coating, colloidal deposition coating, sol-gel coating, and dip-coating.

After coating the cathode active medium **16** on the oxygen ion-conducting electrolyte **18**, the anode active medium can be infused, absorbed and/or adsorbed into the pores **34** of the porous anode current collector. For instance, an oxide of the elemental metal can be infused into the pores of the porous anode current collector. The oxide can be infused into the pores by using techniques such as dipping the porous anode current collector into a suspension of the oxide of the elemental metal. Alternately, the oxide can be infused into the pores by using the metal alkoxide that corresponds to the porous anode current collector in combination with a sol-gel reaction. The infused oxide can be reduced to the elemental metal by exposing the porous anode current collector to hydrogen gas.

Alternately, the anode active medium can be infused, absorbed and/or adsorbed into the pores of the porous by using a liquid form of the anode active medium. The anode active medium can be infused, absorbed and/or adsorbed into the pores by soaking the porous current collector in the liquid anode active medium. Alternative for placing a liquid form of the anode active medium in the pores include spattering and physical vapor deposition. Combinations of two or more techniques selected from a group consisting of soaking, spattering, and physical vapor deposition can also be employed.

The anode adhesion layer **37** and the cathode adhesion layer **64** can be coated on the porous anode current collector **22**. Suitable materials for the anode adhesion layer **37** include, but are not limited to, contact pastes and inks such as silver ink or anode ink. Suitable anode inks can have the same

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materials as the anode active medium combined with a binder such as a polymer binder. Suitable materials for the cathode adhesion layer include, but are not limited to, contact pastes and inks such as silver ink or cathode ink. Suitable cathode inks can have the same materials as the anode active medium combined with a binder such as a polymer binder.

The cathode current collector can be connected to the cathode active medium by using the cathode adhesion layer as an adhesive. Additionally, the anode conductor can be connected to the porous current collector by using the anode adhesion layer as an adhesive.

Other embodiments, combinations and modifications of this invention will occur readily to those of ordinary skill in the art in view of these teachings. Therefore, this invention is to be limited only by the following claims, which include all such embodiments and modifications when viewed in conjunction with the above specification and accompanying drawings.

The invention claimed is:

1. A battery, comprising:

a cathode configured to generate oxygen ions during discharge of the battery;

an oxygen ion conducting electrolyte positioned to receive the oxygen ions from the cathode during discharge of the battery, the oxygen ion conducting electrolyte being a solid at an operating temperature of the battery; and

an anode including an anode active medium positioned in the pores of a porous anode current collector such that the anode active medium receive the oxygen ions conducted through the oxygen ion conducting electrolyte during discharge of the battery, the anode active medium including an elemental metal that reacts with the oxygen ions to form a metal oxide during discharge of the battery.

2. The battery of claim 1, wherein the anode active medium is a liquid at the operating temperature of the battery.

3. The battery of claim 1, wherein the porous current collector contacts the oxygen ion conducting electrolyte.

4. The battery of claim 1, wherein the anode active medium consists of the elemental metal.

5. The battery of claim 1, wherein the elemental metal includes lithium metal.

6. The battery of claim 1, wherein the elemental metal is one of a plurality of elemental metals included in the anode active medium.

7. The battery of claim 1, wherein the cathode is exposed to air.

8. The battery of claim 1, wherein:

the cathode is exposed to air;

the anode active medium includes liquid lithium; and

the oxygen ion conducting electrolyte contacts the porous current collector.

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9. The battery of claim 1, wherein:

the anode active medium is a liquid at the operating temperature of the battery; and

the metal oxide is a solid at an operating temperature of the battery.

10. The battery of claim 1, wherein:

the anode active medium is a solution that includes one or more melting point reducers, the melting point reducers reducing the melting point of the metal oxide in the solution below the melting point that the metal oxide would have in the solution if the one or more melting point reducers were not present in the solution.

11. The battery of claim 10, wherein the one or more melting point reducers are present in the solution before the initial discharge of the battery.

12. The battery of claim 10, wherein at least one of the one or more melting point reducers is selected from a group consisting of secondary metal oxides and metal halides, the secondary metal oxides being different from the metal oxide.

13. The battery of claim 12, wherein the secondary metal oxides are limited to boron oxide (B_2O_3) and phosphorus oxide (P_2O_5) and the metal halides are limited to lithium chloride and potassium chloride.

14. The battery of claim 1, wherein the oxygen ion conducting electrolyte contacts the anode and the cathode.

15. The battery of claim 1, wherein the oxygen ion conducting electrolyte contacts the elemental metal.

16. The battery of claim 1, wherein the elemental metal is molten at the operating temperature of the battery.

17. The battery of claim 1, wherein the elemental metal is molten at the operating temperature of the battery.

18. The battery of claim 17, wherein the oxygen ion conducting electrolyte contacts the elemental metal and the cathode.

19. A battery, comprising:

a cathode configured to generate oxygen ions during discharge of the battery;

a solid oxygen ion conducting electrolyte positioned to receive the oxygen ions from the cathode during discharge of the battery; and

an anode including a liquid anode active medium positioned in the pores of a porous anode current collector such that the anode active medium receive the oxygen ions conducted through the oxygen ion conducting electrolyte during discharge of the battery,

the anode active medium including an elemental metal that reacts with the oxygen ions to form a metal oxide during discharge of the battery.

20. The battery of claim 19, wherein:

the cathode is exposed to air;

the anode active medium includes liquid lithium; and

the oxygen ion conducting electrolyte contacts the porous current collector.

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